

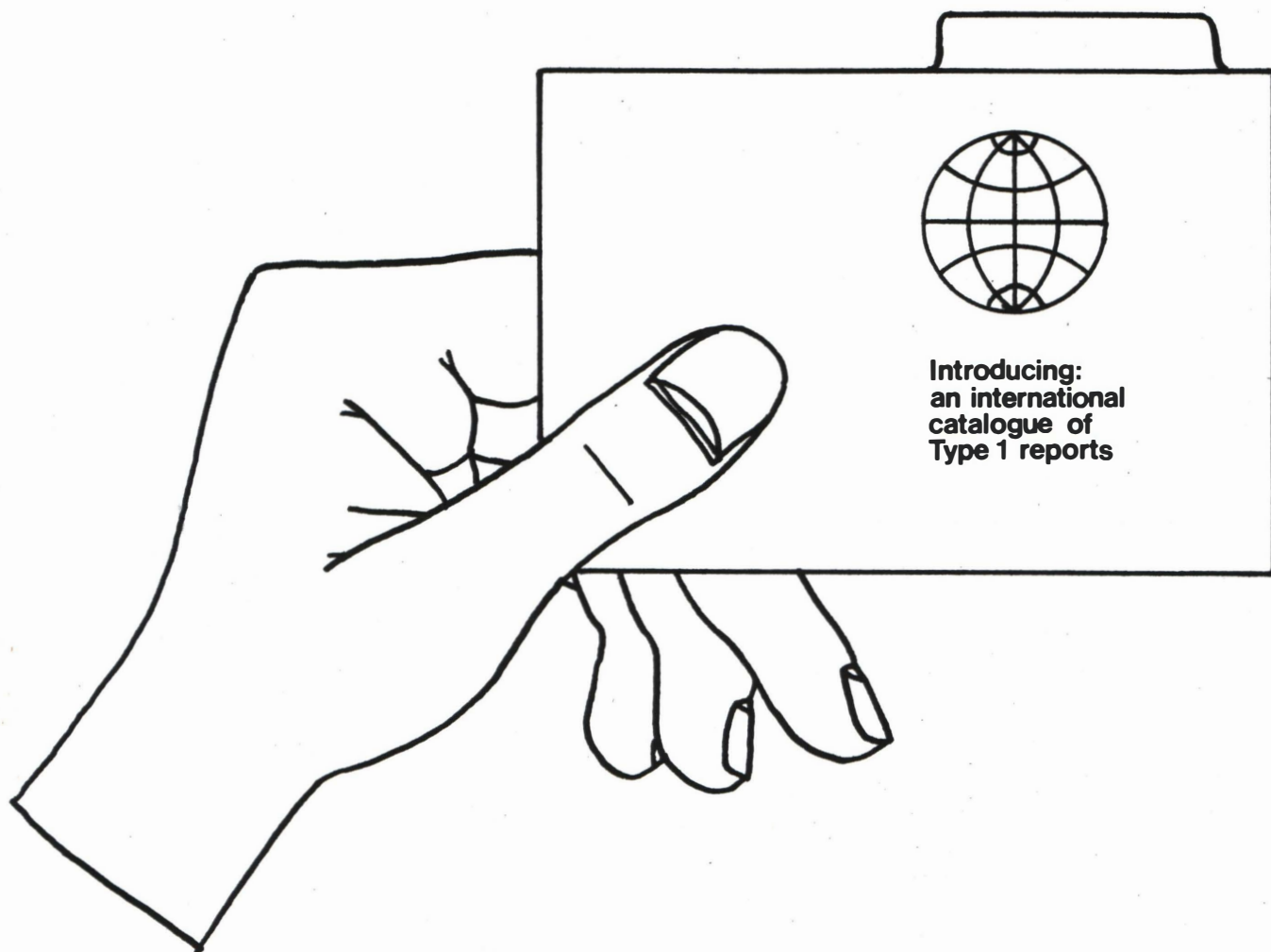
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Merseyside UFO Bulletin

Autumn 1972

Editorial Panel: John Harney; John Rimmer; Peter Rogerson; Alan Sharp.



EDITORIAL

Type I Catalogue

In this issue we introduce a catalogue of Type I UFO reports, compiled by Peter Rogerson from various sources. The first part of the catalogue, covering the period from 1868 to the end of the nineteenth century, will appear in our next issue.

The first instalment of the catalogue will contain 46 reports and we will publish as many items as possible in each issue. Any correspondence about the catalogue should be addressed to Peter Rogerson.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

From Mr ALFONSO MARTINEZ TABOAS

"Sincerely, I had a good time reading Alan W. Sharp's article, 'The New Ufology'.

"Really we, in this sometimes tiresome subject of UFOs and allied themes, need scientific opinions to clear up all the nonsense and semi-scientific details of the stories that we are studying.

"Mr Sharp, in his long article, demonstrated beyond doubt that John Keel's books are not reliable and similarly Vallee's book, 'Passport to Lagonia'. We, the persons with an analytic and scientific mind, cannot take seriously the tales accumulated to form a case for the existence of fairies and demons.

"Mr Sharp, too, demonstrated how the miracle of Fatima was nothing more than 'the sun becoming visible through thinning cloud'; how the 'little people' observed near lakes and swamps were, without doubt, 'ignis fatuus'; how the fantastic account of a demon throwing fire in a church was nonsense, etc., etc.

"As a good and orthodox scientist Mr Sharp tried to smash and tear to pieces the so-called 'New Ufology'. His critical approach is very welcome by his fellow scientists."

The above quotations were made by a 'critical scientist', maybe Donald Menzel.

Concerning me, I think it was well written, but its narrow views are irritating and on occasions infuriating. But I don't repent of reading it, because Alan Sharp has increased my conviction that we are being subjected in many ways to mysterious beings, that is, 'ultraterrestrials'. This is so, simply because after that cool, biased and prejudiced 'analysis' (if the study deserves that word) of Sharp, the theory and the beliefs expressed by Keel and Vallee are as strong as ever.

First of all, I must express my discontent with the undoubted contradictions and inconsistencies of Keel's books, but many of the basic facts and arguments are very valuable for every serious student of ufology. I want to express, too, my firm conviction that the much talked of theory of the subjective origin of UFOs and extraneous beings is, by and large, insupportable.

The writings from Mr Sharp's pen remind me of the writings of the late Frank Podmore, the latter a writer on psychical research, whose extremely critical approach to the subject is characterised by grandiose structures of speculation, almost quite as fantastic as the intervention of the spirits of the dead.

Now, I would like to make a distinction between the credulous, objective and sceptical person.

The first is a person who believes in certain things but does not have a basis for his conclusions and is completely uncritical.

The second, the objective, is the person who comes to a subject with an unbiased and open mind. He considers the evidence and weighs the facts in a dispassionate way. He is critical but not in the extreme.

The sceptical person is commonly confounded with the objective. The sceptical is frequently as credulous as the credulous. He accepts doubtful "exposures of fraud", alleged "confessions", and accepts dubious conclusions to "resolve" or to eliminate the "nonsense" of some reports. It is significant to note that the alternative "solutions" to "resolve" what they call fantastic cases or details are more incredible than the proper facts. I think that Mr Sharp's place is here, in group three. By the way, not a very respectable place.

The solutions that Mr Sharp offers for the cases of the little people, the miracle of Fatima etc, are preposterous, and are pure and nothing more than highly sceptical criticism.

The psychical investigator Walter Franklin Prince once wrote: "Even rational men, unable to cope with facts against which they have an emotional complex, frequently react irrationally, set up an illusory dogma and cling to it as a pillar of safety. So we hear that psychic or supernormal facts are 'impossible' by the 'logic of science', are contrary to the laws of nature, and destructive to the principles of the universe."

Mr Sharp mentions that Vallee gives in his books some cases which proved later to have natural explanations. Sincerely I do not see anything extraordinary here. The incredible thing would be if none of the hundreds of cases that Vallee gives could be explained.

"It is noticeable", says Mr Sharp, "that the new ufology is antipathetic to science...for the mere existence of science compels the new ufology to become nebulous to the point of self-extinction". I must confess that I do not agree, in part, with Mr Sharp here. I think that he must substitute the word "science" with "scientists", but not all of them. A scientist is not a computer, he is a living being, each with different opinions, prejudices, ideas, etc. I think that a scientist with an open mind, and with proper experience in the UFO and psychical fields, could, at least, consider the theory of the "ultraterrestrials". Unfortunately, there are few open-minded scientists in this field; usually they are of the prototype of Mr Sharp.

Mr Sharp, too, says that the new ufology is full of "wasteful speculations". I think that Charles Bowen has a reasonable reply to that argument: "Speculation is both reasonable and valid when closely linked to the reported facts". (FSR 17:4)

Mr Sharp, when referring to the physical aspects of the seance room, says that they are a "hoaxer's paradise" and goes on to argue that any illusionist can deceive the audience. Hence, he concludes the physical phenomena are a fraud. Really it is not surprising to hear that from Mr Sharp because his partner, and I am referring to the late Frank Podmore, died without ever accepting the physical phenomena, when it is clearly a fact. Apparently Mr Sharp does not know or ignores the fact that many respected conjurors and illusionists accepted the physical phenomena. Among them were Carrington, Harry Price, Keller, Thurston, Houdini, etc. As a matter of fact, many of them entered the field with the purpose of exposing mediums, but the phenomena convinced them.

Mr Sharp then went on to invoke Mr Milbourne Christopher, author of "Seers, Psychics and ESP", and said that this famous magician can resolve all the mysteries of the seance room, and others. The mentioned book, although it is in some ways instructive for the credulous, is violently biased and its distortions and deliberate omissions of facts are damnable for the seriousness of the book. In fact, there are a pretty good number of books of that type circulating, books that are not reliable and which contain "explanations" that are taken for granted only by the incredulous; their extreme credulity on that part makes them accept that type of trash. As a matter of fact, the parapsychologist Scott Rogo was right when he said in his review of that book: "If Mr Christopher intends his book as a serious challenge to parapsychology I'm afraid it will be received with humour and contempt."

I think that Mr Sharp, apparently, is a little naive about physical mediumship.

It is noteworthy to note that Mr Sharp denies the existence of ESP (extra-sensory perception). Well at least Mr Sharp will have a crown on his head, that is the crown of the sceptics, because Frank Podmore believed in ESP!

(continued on page 37)

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE FORTHCOMING INTERNATIONAL CATALOGUE OF

TYPE I REPORTS

by Peter Rogerson

It is now some three years since the publication of Jacques Vallee's annotated catalogue, "A Century of UFO Landings 1868-1963"(1) and four years have passed since the closing date of entries. The number of entries in that catalogue was 923. As of July 31 1972 the number of reports logged stood at 1977, more than double the original figure.

In view of this it was felt desirable to produce a new catalogue reflecting this expansion. It had been originally our intention to publish in a new catalogue only those reports not included in the "Magonia" catalogue. Two considerations caused us to change this policy; firstly it was felt that such an action would lead to a serious distortion of perspective; secondly the "Magonia" catalogue is not generally available to researchers in the United Kingdom. So, with the very generous permission of Dr Vallee, the cases from both the "Magonia" catalogue and Senor Ballester's catalogue of Iberian cases will be published in sequence.

It was decided to publish this catalogue in MUFOB for several reasons. The editor, John Harney, was one of the first British researchers to call for intensive studies of Type I reports (2), and this catalogue is the renewal of that interest. It was felt inappropriate to publish in a more public medium reports that have not been adequately cross-checked. MUFOB does not have a wide general audience, but does have a circulation among serious students of the phenomena. It is hoped that all our readers will study the catalogue, distribute it amongst interested parties, cross-check reports in their localities, inform us of any reports that have been satisfactorily explained, and supply any reports they have knowledge of, which have not been included. Reports from foreign language journals are especially required. It is hoped that reports entered in this catalogue will be checked against and entered in Dr Vallee's central computer files.

Sources

A detailed examination of the sources of Type I data will be found in the introduction to the "Magonia" catalogue, so this section will discuss the sources of post-"Magonia" data.

The continuing major source of Type I reports is Flying Saucer Review (3), which is practically the only major source of reports from the non-English speaking world published in the English language. Extensive coverage of United States reports can be found in two excellent journals, Data-Net (4) and Skylook (5). Canada was served by two capable journals, Saucers Space and Science (6) and Canadian UFO Report (7), the former unhappily now defunct. Other major sources were the latter two books by the Lorenzens (8,9), Hervey's "UFOs over the Southern Hemisphere" (10), for Australian reports, "Mysteries of the Skies" (11), for pre-1947 reports, Fawcett column in Palmer's Flying Saucers (12), the now defunct UFO Chronolog (13), Ufolog (14), and a number of other documents which will be noted as the catalogue progresses.

Research developments

Since the publication of the "Magonia" catalogue there have been several important developments.

1. The publication of the first national catalogue of reports, the Iberian catalogue (15) prepared by Vincent Juan Ballester Olmos.

From this catalogue a number of studies have been made (with the collaboration of Dr Vallee), several of which have appeared in translation in Data-Net. Senor Ballester has emerged as one of the most significant figures in the study of the phenomena.

2. The American journal Data-Net has since early 1970 begun to specialise in the study of Type I reports and has compiled a listing of US reports, published studies by Jacques Vallee, Ted Phillips, and Ballester and his co-workers on this problem, and publishes a sizeable number of Type I reports in the lists of reports taken from the presses of the English speaking world. (Clippings from Rod Dyke (16))

3. The present writer, in collaboration with Dr Vallee, is engaged on a study of the Type I reports in the British Isles.

Compilation

The catalogue was commenced in the early Spring of 1971. Basically, reports were abstracted from sources following the style of the "Magonia" catalogue. Efforts were made to standardise description, avoid emotive or biased phrasing, while preserving some flavour of the original.

Each report should ideally contain exact date, exact location, names of witnesses, full concise description of the event, full references. These restrictions are somewhat relaxed for earlier reports, and for many witnesses names are omitted at source. The sources given are usually the most accessible.

Demonstration Entry

Jan. 23 1974 Neasden (Great Britain) 22.50

While driving through Neasden, Albert Figgis observed a dark object overhead. As it descended to 10m. alt. Mr Figgis's car stalled and the lights and radio faded out. Through an opening in the object, which was circular, d. 25 m., 6 m. thick, a shadowy humanoid figure could be seen. The object rose up with "terrifying" speed and disappeared in c. 3 secs. Later a patch of burnt and depressed grass was discovered at the point where the object hovered. (Neasden UFO Bulletin 3,6)

Reports which have received wide publicity will be treated more briefly than reports which have received little publicity.

Note

The following statement from the introduction to the "Magonia" catalogue is so important that it is reproduced in full:

"We shall not apologise for the inclusion of reports which may with reason be regarded as unbelievable or ludicrous. We are not claiming that any of the reports in this list relates to a real physical event. We are compiling not a table of controlled laboratory experiments but only a general guide for a study of the abundant literature of this intriguing subject. IT WOULD BE AN UNFAIR PROCEDURE AND A GRAVE MISUNDERSTANDING OF OUR PURPOSE TO ASSUME THAT ALL CASES IN THE LIST STAND AT THE SAME LEVEL OF RELIABILITY OR TO CLAIM THAT THE PRESENCE OF THIS OR THAT PARTICULAR CASE SUPPORTS OR WEAKENS BY ITSELF THE CREDIBILITY OF ANY OTHER. WE CANNOT ACCEPT RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE MISTAKES OF THOSE WHO IGNORE THIS WARNING."

This statement holds equally true for the present catalogue, and the omission of words such as alleged, ostensible, claims, etc is merely to preserve the ease of reading, and does not imply endorsement of any case. The only reason for exclusion is either positive identification as a mundane object, or direct evidence of hoax, either in the form of a confession or the production of dubious photographs and artifacts.

Comments, criticisms and suggestions will be welcomed.

For a more detailed discussion of the problems of cataloguing procedure and a full examination of sources, see the introduction to the "Magonia" catalogue.

References

- 1 VALLEE, JACQUES "A century of UFO landings: 1868-1968. Published as an appendix to Passport to Magonia, Regnery, Chicago. 1969. pp 164-342.
- 2 HARNEY, JOHN "Type I UFO reports--investigation, research and hypotheses", MUFORG Bulletin, August 1966. p 4.
- 3 Flying Saucer Review, 21 Cecil Court, Charing Cross Road, London, WC2N 4HB. (ed Charles Bowen).
- 4 Data-net, 7900 Harvard Drive, Beh Lomond, California 95005, USA. (ed Josephine J. Clark).
- 5 Skylook, Box 129, Stover, Missouri 65078. (ed Norma E. Short).
- 6 Saucers Space and Science, 17 Shetland Street, Willowdale, Ontario, Canada. (ed Gene Duplantier). Now defunct.
- 7 Canadian UFO Report, Box 758, Duncan BC, Canada. (ed John Magor).
- 8 LORENZEN, CORAL and JIM "UFOs Over the Americas", New American Library, New York. 1968.
- 9 ----- "UFOs the Whole Story", New American Library, New York. 1969.
- 10 HERVEY, MICHAEL "UFOs Over the Southern Hemisphere", Horwitz, Sydney. 1969.
- 11 LORE, GORDON I.R. and HAROLD H. DENEAULT "Mysteries of the Skies: UFOs in Perspective", Hale, London. 1969.
- 12 Flying Saucers, Palmer Publications, Amherst, Wisconsin 54406, USA.
- 13 UFO Chronolog, 43 Richland Drive, Newport News, Virginia 23602 (ed Joseph M. Erhardt). Defunct.
- 14 Ufolog, Ringlemere, Colwell Bay Road, Freshwater, Isle of Wight. (ed Mrs K. Smith). Now incorporated in BUFORA Journal. (Membership Secretary Mrs A. Harcourt, 170 Faversham Road, Kennington, Ashford, Kent. Editor J. Cleary-Baker, 3 Devenish Road, Weeke, Winchester, Hants.)
- 15 VALLEE, JACQUES and JUAN VINCENTE BALLESTER OLMOS "Type I Phenomena in Spain and Portugal", Flying Saucer Review Special Issue No 4, pp 40-64.
- 16 Rod Dyke, UFORC, 3521 SW 104th, Seattle, Washington 98146, USA.

Letter to the Editor (continued from page 34)

To close this rather long letter I will quote Charles Richet, winner of the Nobel Prize, when he says: "It is possible, it is even probable, that there may exist in nature other intelligences under other conditions than the physical conditions of terrestrial life; but they would no longer be human intelligences."

Yours truly, Alfonso Martinez Taboas, 17 Street, 1083, Villa Nevares Dev., Rio Piedras, Puerto Rico 00927

JOHN KEEL AND ALAN SHARP ON THE "NEW UFOLGY"

John Keel attacks Alan Sharp's critique of the New Ufology, but Sharp remains unrepentant....

Department of Health, Education and Welfare
Office of the Secretary
Washington, D.C. 20201

September 25, 1972

Dear John;

While packing my effects preparatory to moving back to NYC this week I came across the enclosed diatribe which was written in response to Alan Sharp's rather

incredible critique in MUFOB. For some reason it never got into the mails.

I have been amused by the ufological reaction to OUR HAUNTED PLANET. Many reviewers, including your Peter Rogerson, seem to have missed the main point of the book altogether, although I tried to spell it out in the introduction. OHP was a compilation of the beliefs of mankind, including ufological beliefs, demonstrating how those beliefs are largely based upon the rather fiendish manipulations and manifestations of the unknown power or phenomenon which surrounds us. None of the manifestations has any genuine meaning so we have always laboured to interpret them and give them our own meanings. Like Charles Fort, I question the sanity of the phenomenon itself.

Perhaps our real problem is that so few ufologists are schooled in history, philosophy and such sciences as archaeology. They are all peering through telescopes and wondering about ET life. Alan Sharp complains about the things that were left out of OTH! In an earlier essay he attacked items, cases, which were summarised in OTH because they were so well-known and had been so widely described in FSR and elsewhere. And I am baffled that he took so many reportorial remarks as indications of some personal belief. Agrest's theories on Baalbek, for example, are just plain silly and I took pains to label them as such in both OTH and OHP. Alas, very few of the theories accepted in ufological circles really hold up under close scrutiny. The June 1972 issue of Scientific American contains a fine article on "Organic Matter in Meteorites" and gives a complete analysis of the celebrated Murchison, Australia carbonaceous chondrite concluding that the organic compounds therein are "most likely of abiotic origin" (product of a chemical process rather than an indication of life). But look at all the rubbish the ufo-zines have published about that one.

Hope all is well with you. Best...

John A Keel

May 1, 1972

Washington, D.C.

Dear John;

I must admit I felt very embarrassed for Alan Sharp when I read his emotional critiques in MUFOB and I'm a bit puzzled you would choose to devote so much space to this Menzelian/Keyhoe type of attack. It seems like something right out of the 1950's.

Poor Alan has denuded himself, exposing his astonishing ignorance of ufology and his apparent inability to read the English language. Since my clearly stated position is really anti-UFO one wonders what his position is. Is he a super-believer or a super-sceptic?

Several years ago I was assigned to write a technical article on meteors, comets, bolides, etc. I naturally contacted the leading authorities and I was taken aback to discover how little hard data actually exists. Mathematical formulae and spectrographic analyses do not impress me at all. The astronomers have been proven totally wrong in almost every important area in the past decade. But I am very aware of all that is being done. For example, a group of Canadian astronomers went to great lengths in 1967 to check the course of a meteorite, interview all the people who saw it, etc., and when I read their thorough report I could only wonder why no-one had ever really conducted the same kind of investigation into a UFO transit.

OTH was written in 1967-68, and was completed long before the Condon report appeared. In fact, I was reading the proofs when the CR reached me. I pencilled in a number of minor references and corrections, added items about Vallee's book (which appeared after OTH was written), etc. For example, the item about the closing of Blue Book (p 293) was added to the galleys. Much of the chapter "Charting the Enigma", which Sharp takes exception to, was published in FSR's Beyond Condon in 1969. A detailed paper on the results of the investigation into the Allende meteor was published long after OTH appeared...as near as I can recall, it was in the Feb. 1971 Science (I don't have any of my files here in D.C.). My material came largely from the Christian Science Monitor, a newspaper which regularly contains the best science coverage. ('Twas a delightful coincidence that the name Allende should be associated with this incident.)

Many of the things commented on by Sharp had been repeated over and over

again in the ufological lore and my own tack was to ridicule items such as Prof. Agrest's crackpot theories on Baalbek. My original section on tektites, etc., was deleted from OTH and later worked into Our Haunted Planet. If Sharp re-reads that chapter of OTH (Chapter 4) he will see that I give full credit to the creators of the various theories outlined and if he reads it carefully he will see that I do not take these theories seriously.

Sharp's critique seems like a rather pointless exercise in egomania. He has clearly not bothered to research any of the subjects he is attacking. Rather, he is trying to draw conclusions and create explanations from sketchy summaries of cases drawn from more detailed articles in FSR and elsewhere. He thinks he is attacking me or Vallee, but all he is really doing is demonstrating his own ignorance of the UFO literature.

He even deigns to attack my rare, brief asides to my personal experiences. For example, if he knew anything about ladies and hair driers he would realise that if a woman fell asleep under a hair drier for two hours her head would be fried. I collected the full, and rather remarkable, details on this particular incident and was convinced that something exceptional had happened. Otherwise I wouldn't have bothered to mention it. He chooses to question my perspicacity and, in fact, has produced a classic piece of the kind of nonsense I ridicule in my introduction to Our Haunted Planet. The UFO field should have outgrown this kind of childish, churlish, irresponsible and highly personalised form of attack.

When I prepared FSR's Beyond Condon I included a rather extensive glossary of terms. An expanded version of this glossary was included with the MS of OTH but remains unpublished. You must remember that I am a professional lexicographer, having served as science editor for Funk and Wagnalls' encyclopedias and Geography Editor for their New College Dictionary (you will find my name listed in their publications). The etymology of ufology has been one of my interests from the start. In ANOMALY I have frequently published glossaries of important terms. It is both presumptuous and pretentious of Sharp to complain about my use or abuse of the language. Although my books have been deliberately "written down" to my audience, Sharp obviously suffers from semantical difficulties.

Many of the things I discussed with deliberate vagueness were actually based upon research now being conducted by many disciplines. For example, at the IEEE symposium in New York this March Dr Robert O. Becker revealed experiments which found that very low frequency EM waves could promote healing of bone fractures (!) and rapid healing of skin ulcers and burns, thus verifying my speculations about "miraculous" and UFO healings.

The U.S. Bureau of Radiological Health, a bureau of the Dept. of Health, Education and Welfare, has been studying these things for years. DHEW's National Institute of Mental Health is very concerned with schizophrenia, a subject closely allied to the UFO phenomenon. It is no secret that I have been working as a consultant to DHEW here in Washington these past six months.

Sharp's credentials are certainly far more limited. In fact, mineralogy is almost as useless to ufology as astronomy.

As for Peter Rogerson's review of Our Haunted Planet, my astonishment is multiplied. The book, largely derived from deleted sections of OTH, was clearly and pointedly an examination of the theories and beliefs of all the crackpot cults; a deliberate appraisal of the "pseudo-scientific garbage" believed by mankind. It summarised many of the major and minor beliefs of these cults but certainly did not support any of them. Yet Rogerson was apparently blinded by some emotionalism when he read it and inverted the meaning of everything he touched upon in his review. I simply pointed out that the basic beliefs of the assassination buffs were identical with the beliefs of cultists using other frames of reference. And in the last chapter I summarised the beliefs of the present youth culture...who are particularly interested in Indians and Indian lore, most of which is founded on visions and mediumistic and drug-induced hallucinations.

Quite a few scientists—all operating outside the UFO field—are working to find the cause(s) of the UFO "effect". In England, a group of scientists now have a funded programme to investigate the "religious experience". In the Soviet Union work

along this line is now very advanced. It is really most difficult to define UFOs per se until we can properly separate the possibly real from the totally subjective. And the world's greatest philosophers and thinkers have been attempting this for 2,500 years.

Sharp and his ilk want us to lapse back to what Husserl termed "phenomenological reduction". Back in 1967 I published a little essay in Saucer News in which I said that the ufologists, like cuckolds, would be the last to "know". Because they are blinded by belief, and because they have an urge to simplify a complicated situation and accept these simplifications as their "truth".

In my three books I have tried to at least touch upon all the popular theories and the "evidence" used to support them. I have never accepted any of that "evidence", rather I have tried to explain why I have rejected all those theories. The "ultraterrestrial theory" is merely a new, more workable frame of reference (new to the UFO field; it is hardly original or new in the strictest sense). The first step to understanding this mess is rejection of the DTH. But there is a long and difficult road ahead for anyone who tries to go beyond it.

My work has been aimed at uncovering and interpreting the cause of these events and experiences. A great deal of headway has been made in recent years and it constantly appals me that so few ufologists seem capable of actual research; of visiting a technical library and examining the literature for themselves.

Many of the things Sharp complains about were, in fact, more fully documented in my many articles published here in the U.S. I wouldn't expect him to be familiar with those articles but I would expect him to exercise suspension of judgement until he was more familiar with the massive material used by Vallee and myself as the basis of our conclusions. He is rejecting the history of mankind out of hand. In Our Haunted Planet I clearly state: "All of this may be absolute nonsense, but we cannot overlook the unhappy fact that these 'truths' were completely believed for thousands of years by the leaders of the world and therefore had an appalling influence over human events and destiny".

Vallee and I realised independently that the core of the problem was belief, and that the rational, philosophical study of belief was necessary to understand the whole. From 1967 onwards I pointedly classified UFOs as manifestations and anomalies, divorcing myself from the concept that they were machines piloted by Venusians. While others have been trying to "prove" their beliefs or, in some cases, their sanity, I have been searching for the underlying causes. That search has led me to reconsider all of man's beliefs, particularly his religious concepts, and while many readers do not fully understand this consciously they do react emotionally on other levels. They suspect I am attacking them in some manner because I am attacking their beliefs. Eric Hoffer explained all this in his book The True Believer. In that book he really defines the average UFO buff and the Menzel/Sharp types who exploit ufology to gratify their own emotional needs.

Millions of people welcome and accept subjective experiences as the basis for their beliefs in ghosts, after-life, Christ, and spacemen. Arthur Shuttlewood is one of these. It is both pointless and vicious to attack Shuttlewood for what he believes, and for his earnest, honest attempts to communicate those beliefs. One can reject the beliefs of such people without rejecting the people themselves. From the little I know about the man, Shuttlewood's sincerity is beyond question. On the other hand, the intellectual integrity of people like Menzel and Sharp can be seriously questioned.

A British paperback of Operation Trojan Horse (by Sphere) will appear later this year. Neville Spearman will publish Our Haunted Planet in hardcover this fall.

Before closing I might add that I contacted some of the religious cults here which are concerned with miracles, particularly Fatima, and they showed me documentation of their search to locate the photos and newsreels taken in Portugal on that day. Apparently someone did go to great expense to collect all the photos. Whether it was the Catholic Church (very likely) or our Men in Black is anyone's guess. The Vatican waited 13 years before classifying Fatima as a "miracle" and did so reluctantly, bending to enormous public pressure.

Wearily; John A Keel

P.S. The boys at the Pentagon laughed outright at Condon's explanation of those metal balls. Such an object would fall too fast to be of any use in "calibrating radar" and it is against all regulations to release such objects from the air. When I read the Condon report I sent a letter to the company he named and never received a reply. In any case, I very openly rejected any evidential possibilities of anomalous aerial debris.

Alan Sharp replies:

Dear John,

I am sorry to see that John Keel has attempted to counter my article "The New Ufology" (MUFOB 4:5) by literary legerdemain and invective, neither of which is any substitute for rational argument.

Take, for instance, his introduction of such concepts as "sincerity", "honesty", and "integrity" into the debate. He questions the "intellectual integrity" of Dr Menzel and myself and defends Arthur Shuttlewood as "sincere" and "honest"; but these are, of course, merely his own subjective opinions and must be evaluated accordingly.

I, at least, do not claim to have had lengthy telephonic conversations with or personal visits from UFO entities, Aenstrians and the like, nor does Dr Menzel to the best of my knowledge.

But let us examine some of the less nebulous matters which Keel raises such, for example, as the question of hair dryers and the alleged dire consequences of falling asleep thereunder. Keel states, authoritatively: "If a woman fell asleep under a hair dryer for two hours her head would be fried", but I have consulted a firm of hairdressing equipment manufacturers and was told by one of their senior executives: "I have been in this business for forty years and know all about the matter of people falling asleep. You can rest assured that strict regulations must be complied with by manufacturers to prevent any harmful effects occurring under such circumstances, for hair dryers exert a restful influence and their users often drop off to sleep."

I shall leave our readers to judge for themselves, as I did in my article when discussing some of the personal information given by Keel in his book Operation Trojan Horse.

Again, Keel virtually calls Dr Craig of the Condon team a liar over the subject of the hollow metal spheres, but I have ascertained that our own Meteorological Office uses hollow aluminium spheres, about fourteen inches in diameter, for the purpose of radar set calibration. Such spheres are useful radar targets because their radar cross-sections are independent of orientation; i.e. their reflecting properties are the same irrespective of the direction of the impinging signal.

These are the two most concrete issues which Keel raises in his letter and I am quite content that the reader should judge between us on their evidence alone. Nevertheless Keel does bring up other matters and I shall attempt to deal with some of them lest it appear that I have been unduly selective.

Take, for instance, the relevance of astronomy to the subject of ufology. On page 144 in Chapter 8 of Operation Trojan Horse Keel declares: "Meteors and comets are vitaly important to our study of unexplained aerial phenomena". (my italics). His assessment of their importance may be gauged by the fact that a great part of the chapter is devoted to a consideration of such celestial objects which, of course, fall within the sphere of astronomy and have obvious mineralogical connotations. Yet in his letter he asserts that: "Mineralogy is almost as useless to ufology as astronomy":

What an extraordinary volte face for one who claims that I am unable to read English, am ignorant of the literature and suffer from "semantical difficulties"! The boot is surely on the other foot with a vengeance!

At this juncture it seems relevant to mention that Keel's comments about qualifications sound remarkably like a case of "sour grapes". I admit that I claim no expertise in journalism, psychological warfare or propaganda writing and I do not suppose that Dr Menzel does either, but I do not consider that the lack of such dubious "qualifications" is any great loss to an honest student of ufology.

On the basis of the matters which I have considered above I suggest that Keel should refrain from making further uncalled for remarks about Dr Menzel and myself and should have a good look at the note in his own eye instead.

Turning now to a different topic I notice that Keel enquires about my position vis-a-vis UFOs, but as I covered that theme pretty thoroughly in the "New Ufology" under the heading "Terminology and Classification" I think it would be more instructive to consider Keel's own position, which seems rather elusive despite his protestations to the contrary. I see that in his letter he states that he has rejected all the "popular theories", of which the ETH is certainly one of the most important, and also says: "I very openly rejected any evidential possibilities of anomalous space debris." What then are we to make of this remark on page 298 of Operation Trojan Horse: "However, it would be very dangerous to exclude the possibility that a very small residue of sightings may be very real." (i.e., in the context, due to extraterrestrial visitation?) The language is evasive but this smacks very much to me of the time-dishonoured device known as "leaving the back door open" or "coppering one's bets"; otherwise described as having one's cake and eating it!

Keel, in fact, clearly accepts the possibility that: "there may be billions of inhabitable planets within our galaxy, and there is always a chance that living beings from those planets might have visited us in the past, are visiting us now, or are planning to visit us in the future".

To accept this possibility but reject the possibility of "anomalous space debris" appears to me highly illogical and inconsistent, if I may have the effrontery to question Keel's use and abuse of language. To add to the confusion Keel elsewhere in his letter states that his own "clearly-stated position is really anti-UFO", so one wonders what he is doing studying the subject of ufology at all. But then he goes on to remark, somewhat tetchily: "It is really most difficult to define the term UFO", and we are back to square one again!

In a final attempt to get to the truth of the matter, therefore, let us turn to page 300 in the last chapter of OTH. Here we read the following cataclysmic avowal in all its grandeur: "But I am now inclined to accept the conclusion that the phenomenon is mainly concerned with undefined (and undefinable) cosmic patterns and that mankind plays only a small part in these patterns". (my italics)

If this is a "clearly stated position" by our "professional lexicographer" then my understanding of the English language is indeed sadly lacking. Note, however, the use of the nebulous term "cosmic patterns" and the qualification that these "patterns" are undefined and undefinable. To make vagueness even more insubstantial note, too, that Keel is only "inclined" to accept this ephemeral "conclusion", reached after nearly 300 pages of tedious text. No wonder that he is so sensitive to factual criticism.

Keel's weighty conclusion is no more than the stuff that dreams are made on and results from a basic refusal to countenance sensible explanations of UFO phenomena. Keel is, unfortunately, merely one of many ufologists who hold similar irrational beliefs and are only too keen to voice their strongly anti-scientific opinions. Your correspondent, Alfonso Martinez Taboas is, I would surmise, another of the same ilk and seems to have an equal dislike of reasonable answers to ufological puzzles. Nevertheless he has taken the trouble to write, in a foreign language, from a considerable distance and it would be discourteous of me not to thank him for his letter. For myself I can only add briefly that I reject all supernatural "explanations", including the so-called parapsychical hypothesis and do not believe that our planet has been in the past or is being now subjected to extraterrestrial visitation, although I am perfectly willing to change this last opinion if and when compelling evidence becomes available.

MERSEYSIDE UFO BULLETIN

VOLUME 5 NUMBER 4

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Printed and published by the editors